"Their number is computed at Yakutsk to be 50,000 males; but I am inclined to think that they are not so numerous; and my reasons are these: They say themselves, that in 1780 they were more numerous than they are now, much better circumstanced, and in an increasing state. At that time they had only one Commander and his Assistant. (1)

1. I am here induced to remark, that before the Empress Catherine II established governments and courts of justice throughput the empire (1782), all these distant towns and districts were governed by a voyavod and his secretary, and Cossacs were sent among the tributary tribes to enforce the imperial mandates. On the establishment of the government, every town had its mayor and different courts of justice allowed; so that there now exist many towns in these remote parts, where the inhabitants consist of government people only.

Upon the Socha chiefs bringing their annual tribute, they always observed the custom of shewing their particular attachment, by making these gentlemen a [113] trifling present of furs, horses, and cattle, and supplying their table with flesh, fish, milk, and butter, and also with wild fowl. Considering their immense possessions, and the cheapness of all the articles, these presents were never felt as of any consequence by the

individuals who made them. At present, however, their stock is considerably diminished, not amounting to one tenth part of what it was. Instead of having only the voyavod and his secretary to deal with, they now know not how many commanders they have to pay their respects to. A commandant, a captain of the district, a director of economy, judges of the different courts of justice, with their secretaries and dependants, and other officers, are occasional travellers among them; beside which, they complain of numberless exactions according to the arbitrary will of their superiors, only authorised by their own presumption.

These circumstances undoubtedly discourage the activity of the Yakut, who no longer endeavors to procure wealth, because it is the likeliest means of making him the object of persecution. Thus property, tranquillity, and population decrease. The princes or chiefs dwelling near towns acquire their luxuries, and oppress their dependant tribes to procure wine and brandy in addition to their koumis: this was never known among them till the year 1785. I will farther add, that in 1784 the district of Gigansk produced 4834 tributary natives; but in 1789 their number amounted only to 1938. Mr. Bonnar, the captain of the district of Zashiversk, told me, that the tributary nations in his circle amounted to only half the number that they were five years ago and that these were very poor indeed."

6: Sauer--136 G-5 (1785-94) 1802 Yakut
116, 101, 161, 651

"To give my readers an idea of the population of these northern parts of Siberia, I here note the inhabitants from the latitude of 64 to the extremity of the north coast, and from the river Kovima, westward to the Anabara.

The district of Zashiversk comprehends the rivers Kovima, Alafey, Indigerka, and Yana, and those that flow into them; the tributary nations are,

Yakuti	- -	2810
Lamut and Tungoose	-	742
Yukagiri	- -	322
Tshuvantsi and Chatinsy	-	37
Tribute received 1788 amounts to rubles 4560 for		3911 males.

The circuit is about 6000 versts in circumference. The district of Gigansk, a town north of Yakutsk on the Lena, contains one church, two government houses, seven private ones, and 15 huts. It has a mayor (Gorodnitshik) and his chancery, a court of the district (Zemikoi Sud), and a magistracy, although the merchants are mere trading pedlars, and only two, I think, in number. Its circuit also is about 6000 versts from the Yana to the Anabara, which divides the governments of Tobolsk and Irkutsk. The tributary nations are,

Yakuti	- -	1449
Tungoose	- -	489
		1938

Tribute received in 1788--56 sables, 262 foxes, and rubles 1169 in money."

7: Shklovsky -- 47 T-3 (1891-92) 1916 Yakut
116, 618, 651, 565, 558, 735

"Very interesting is the clan's system of the distribution of taxation among its members. At the general assembly the clan is divided into three groups. The first group is composed of the poorest Yakuts, illegitimate children, and transported settlers, who are billeted upon the clan. This group does not bear any responsibility, and is called Itimnit (the paupers' group).

The members of the second group do not pay anything, but are obliged to maintain a certain number of paupers. The last group has also to maintain a certain number of paupers, and, in addition, to pay money, sometimes at so high a rate that it amounts to fifty roubles per head per annum. By means of this arrangement the Yakuts (in the two northern districts of the Yakutsk region) have no paupers; but, in truth, the condition of the Itimnit is very pitiable, for, except the transported settlers, all are the slaves of the chief. The members of the clan had unlimited power over their kinsmen, and in fact the power still remains, for they can keep the men as unpaid labourers, and even sell the young girls to any who want them."

7: Shklovsky -- 207 T-3 (1891-92) 1916 Yakut
116, 175, 651

"As a matter of fact, the Yakuts did not run away directly after the death of Dygyn(1) [RCH: see category 116, pp. 205-207]

1. Dygyn was a petty chief, an historical personage.

In 1683 the first Governor was appointed, Peter Golovin, and another to help him, Gliyebof, and a priest Efim Filatof. They all arrived in Yakutsk on the 6th of June, 1640, accompanied by 'streltzy' (regulars), Cossacks, various small officials, and traders.

'The Government of this place began with heavy taxation, not certainly for the profit of the Government, but for the officials,' says Moskvin, a Yakutsk merchant, whose manuscript chronicle, 'The Officials of Yakutsk and Their Doings,' covers the period ending 1821."

9: Stadling--88-89 E-3 (1898) 1901 Yakut
116, 621, 631, 651

"The Yakuts live in groups, scattered here and there in the forests or on the tundras, each family living in a yurta, or, if on the tundra, in tents. If they were evenly distributed over the whole country, each family or yurta would dispose of an area of nearly twenty-eight square miles. But the Yakuts, as we have mentioned above, prefer settling in groups, where there is plenty of pasture, or in the neighbourhood of lakes and rivers abounding with fish, or in forests where game is to be had. Such groups or communities are called aga-usa ('paternal-families' [89] or relations). The members of these communities of relatives do not marry within the community, but they keep together to help and protect each other. They elect an 'elder' and form a council, which decides their common affairs, settles disputes, etc. These communities in their turn associate themselves into larger groups, forming the so-called naslegi (association of family communities), which again are organised into ulus, corresponding to the Russian village-districts (volost). At the head of the ulus stands the golova or chief, with an upràva or kind of police-court. The naslegi are administered by a district-council and a district-elder having the title of kujas (prince), which was conferred on these tribal chiefs by Catherine II. The taxes are collected by the local authorities of the ulus, which are by law connected with the officials of the imperial treasury and the police authorities. The taxes (Yassak) were formerly paid in the shape of furs, but the sable having to a great extent been exterminated, they are now paid in money, the amount of which, plus communal taxes, varies between 12 and 50 shillings per tributary 'soul', depending on the decision of the local authorities and the economical condition of the tax-payer."

9: Stadling--112 E-3 (1898) 1901 Yakut
116, 167, 651, 177.65 Russia
636.65

"The historical records of those times, scanty though they are, serve, in addition to the traditions of the natives, to show the manner in which the latter were subjugated to Russian rule. Having by finesse or by firearms made themselves lords and masters, and robbed the natives of their furs and skins, these scoundrels compelled them to contribute annually, under the name of Yassak or taxes, a large quantity of sable and other valuable furs, and in consequence they were soon reduced to extreme want and famine. A large number of them fled to the most distant parts of the country to the north and north-east, but the invaders followed them even down to the Arctic sea and to the border of the land of the Tschuktchis, compelling them to pay the Yassak. These adventurers met with very little resistance; only the then numerous Yukagirs and Lamuts fought bravely for their liberty, and, later, the courageous Tschuktchi, who up to this day, though nominally under Russian rule, have in reality preserved their independence."

13: Sarytschew--9 [2] N-3 (1785-90) 1806 Yakut
116, 262, 651, 797

"The number of Jakuts who have embraced the Christian faith is not inconsiderable, yet the majority are of the poorer class, who have submitted to be baptised perhaps in order to be freed for some years from the poll-tax. The rich are not disposed to renounce a plurality of wives, nor the use of meat, butter, milk, and above all, horse-flesh, during the fasts, as enjoined by the Catholic faith. The latter is the greatest delicacy they can possibly conceive; and they often tell the Russians, that if they were once to make a proper meal from the flesh of a horse, they would in future prefer it to the tenderest beef. They eat the fat of horses and cows mostly raw, without any addition, and drink melted butter with the greatest avidity; which latter they regard as an excellent remedy for many disorders, and rub their sick with it when necessary. By way of pacifying a cross child, they put a piece of raw fat into its hand to suck. In summer, when the mares foal, they make their kumys from the milk, after the manner of the Tartars. Their beverage, in winter, consists of sour milk, unchurned butter, and water, which I found indeed not unpalatable. Hence it will appear, that almost all their food is composed of things forbidden by our (the Greek) church; but our priests keep the converted Jakuts very strict to their duty, and will not allow them to touch a single article that is prohibited; but as they have neither corn, fruit, nor fish, it is almost impossible for them to abstain so rigidly. The cause, therefore, why so many Jakuts remain heathens, may be attributed to the indulgence of their appetites."

16: Great Britain Admiralty --164 [3] G-3 (no date) 1920 Yakut
116. 651. 177.65 Russia
636.65

" The Russians used to tax the Yakuts in furs; now they tax them in coin. A poll-tax of 4 roubles is or was levied on them, the richer among them paying income tax as well."

17: Erman--292 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut -1-2
116, 533, 175, 651, 177.65 Russia
636.65

"I have already mentioned a census of the indigenous population, which had been made the preceding year in the northern part of the government of Tobolsk. A similar work was now going forward in Eastern Siberia, and I met in Yakutsk with three excellent men who were employed in its execution. Of these, M. Pyatuitki alone was connected with the finance department in St. Petersburg, while MM. Tásken and Slòbin, from the mines of Nerchinsk, were associated with him, in order to afford him the opportunity of becoming acquainted with whatever mineral riches might exist in the tracts of country gone over. The main object of the expedition was to make a new assessment of the yasak or fur tribute for the several families and tribes of the indigenous population; and we were told thay they were instructed by the government to deal with the people in the mildest possible manner. Yet they had been able to increase the yasak every where throughout the tracts occupied by the Yakuts and Tunguzes along the Upper Lena, as the number of inhabitants had increased there considerably during the last fifty years. It is said that the same result is obtained for all Siberia taken together, and that exceptions are to be found only in localities where endemic diseases prevail, as in the case of the Verkhovian Ostyaks. I heard on this occasion of a particular kind of numerical notation, invented during the present intercourse with the aboriginal tribes, and in which the new assessments were expressed and enjoined to the several communities, and the old accounts settled. It consisted of only six different figures, which represented furs

to the value of 5 and 10 kopeks, and of 1, 10, 100, and 1000 roobles respectively. When the amount of the assessment was agreed on, it was written in these runes on paper, and then cut on wooden staves as permanent memorials, as the Ostyaks and Votyaks are accustomed to do in their private transactions. To the inhabitants of remote and secluded yurts this was obviously an event of great importance, and worthy to form an epoch in their history. The Yakuts celebrated it in extemporaneous songs, of which a Russian interpreter preserved this fragment: 'The commission erected its throne with us for the good of all; receive it well, ye other tribes, that ye also may be dealt with wisely.'"

19: Kharuzin -- 41 E-4 (no date) 1898 Yakut
116, 614, 651, 732, 736

The solidarity of the kinsmen further expresses itself in extensive mutual aid. "When disaster strikes," writes M. Pripuzov, "each clan assists its indigent kinfolk, either through an assessment on the tax-paying individuals, or through the contributions of the separate families." The support of the kutalani, i. e., of the persons unable to provide a subsistence for themselves (aged cripples, orphans, having neither father nor mother, etc.) constitutes an obligation of the clan or the separate families which compose it. The closest kinsmen are the customary guardians of the incapacitated members of the tribe: the mentally diseased, deaf and dumb, blind, etc.

19: Kharuzin -- 61 E-4 (no date) 1898 Yakut -1-2
116, 423, 556, 651, 686

But with regard to meadows, whose significance for the Yakut community, thanks to the cattle raising economy, is extremely great, the Yakuts, under the influence of the system for levying taxes, have elaborated other, more accurate modes of utilization than those based on occupation. With regard to the sharing of meadow sites among the Yakuts of the district studied by Mr. Pripuzov, a system of divisions has been established which are made on the basis of social contracts for 10 years and more. Fixed terms for the divisions apparently do not exist. The meadows are customarily divided into three categories, with corresponding taxes [RCH: presumably taxes paid to the Russian government] and obligations imposed on the separate families. The most powerful households have meadow lands of the first category--40 cart loads; the second category, assigned to the well-to-do, gives 20 cart loads; and finally the third category, for the poor, gives 10 cart loads. Only those who have meadow lands of the 1st category can be elected elders. The community vigilantly guards after the punctual payment and fulfillment of his obligations by each Yakut; for the performance of the latter, it is permitted to hire another person. In the case of defaulting payers of taxes the community takes away their section of meadow land or part of it and rents it out to cover the arrears. (1)

1. Mr. Pripuzov makes mention of rather interesting information concerning local measurements among the Yakuts. Although the Yakuts are generally acquainted with Russian measurements, they make simultaneously use of

19: Kharuzin --61 E-4 (no date) 1898 Yakut-2
116, 423, 556, 651, 686

their own. Thus, the circumference of a haystack is given in terms of sagenes-bylas; the hides of larger animals are measured in soles-ullugakh; small objects (bridles, axes, etc.) are measured by the spread of the hand-tu-tum; or by the distance between the thumb and middle finger-kharys. The thickness of fat on meat is measured in fingers-ili. The length of a road is defined by a unit which is equal to about 10 versts- kyos (a word which, according to Mr. Pripuzov, is equivalent to: "to travel or to move from one place to another with cattle and household utensils"), or by a day's march- kundyuk. Finally, the time of the day is designated in accordance with the nomad cattle-breeder's way of life, as the time of milking the cows and mares; a smaller unit of time is that required to cook a meal- uyos-bystyna.

[RCH: This footnote has been reproduced in the files under separate categories; see category 804, p. 61 this source]

24: Wrangell--65 G-3 (1820-23) 1842 Yakut
116, 161, 651, 177.65 Russia
636.65

"In the whole Kolyma circle there are now 325 Russian peasants, citizens, and Cossacks, 1034 Jakuti, and 1139 Jukahiri and other races; in all, 2498 males, of whom 2173 pay jassak or tribute.

This jassak consists of 803 foxes and 28 sables, which may be estimated 6704 roubles, and 10, 847 roubles in money, making an average of about eight roubles to be paid by every male of the Jakuti and other tribes."

24: Wrangell--192 G-3 (1820-23) 1842 Yakut
116, 166, 511, 651, 177.16 Russia
636.16

"The Tschuwanzi and Jukahiri of the greater Aniuj, from having had far less intercourse with the Russians than has been the case with the dwellers on the banks of the lesser Aniuj, have retained much more of their original language, manners, and customs. The Lamuti and Tungusi along these two rivers have also lost their tame reindeer, and now live poorly on the uncertain produce of the chase and the fisheries. Nor are those Jakuti much better off, who have been brought by the government from the banks of the Aldan, to aid in transporting provisions and other stores to the fort which formerly existed on the Anadyr. Separated from the rest of their countrymen, they have forgotten even their language, and have assimilated to the Russians in manners, mode of life, and even physical appearance. They live almost exclusively by fishing, and their only domestic animals are the dogs which they use for draught.

The population on the banks of the Aniuj has increased latterly, but this cannot be regarded as a sign of improvement in the condition of the people. It is caused by the influx of different nomade tribes, who, having lost their reindeer by sickness or other causes, have been forced to seek their subsistence in the neighbourhood of the rivers, like the rest of their countrymen. The number of persons in this district who still continue to lead a nomade life does not exceed 400. All the inhabitants are subject to a yearly tribute, which they pay partly in furs and partly in money."

38: Dobell--38-39 G-2 (1812-13) 1830 Yakut
116, 114, 431, 556, 651, 661

"The chiefs and head men are very fond of making presents to the Chief and other officers of Government, because it is for them a very profitable business. When a present is made, a collection takes place from all the Yakuts of the Ouloos; and I have been assured the Prince generally collects at least twice the [39] amount of the present, taking care to put the surplus in his own pocket. This, and low wages together, have reduced the poorer class of Yakuts to a state of slavery; for, as they cannot pay their debts, they are obliged to serve those hard masters on their own terms. The tribes of Yakuts being now nearly all Christians and civilised, they ought to be put on the same footing with Russians, which would tend in a great measure to do away with a number of the abuses actually existing. Above all, measures should be adopted to abolish venality and peculation: that course seems necessary as well for the preservation as the prosperity of Siberia. The privileged classes should not be suffered to trade without taking out a license, which is actually the case, and whereby the merchant is injured, who pays the crown, and has to strive against an unfair competition."

38: Dobell--43-44 G-2 (1812-13) 1830 Yakut
116, 651

"The natives pay a tribute to the government in sables and foxes; the sables are received at [44] seven roubles each, and the foxes at two roubles each; but I really wonder that the government does not, in preference, tax them in money, as being the more equitable way. Sables are worth twenty to twenty-five roubles each, and foxes seven to eight; therefore the poor Yakut receives too little, especially when he is oftentimes himself obliged to buy his yasak, or tribute."

/182 cont./

114 Olenék, near the mouth, he found the sunken graves overgrown with moss and lichens; only a weathered wooden cross with a barely legible inscription recalls the hero to mind. Perhaps an age that has again turned its interest to a significant degree to the navigation of the Arctic Ocean will set up a worthy monument for this deserving champion at the place where he ended his heroic career.

175 At that time Russian peasants probably lived
178 here; perhaps the present inhabitants are in part descendants
[651] of the many crews that came here with those bold commanders; they still call themselves krestjáne, i.e., peasants, and their crown tax seems to be standardized accordingly, differing from that of the other Jakuten /Yakut/; in everything else they are completely Jakutized and any reminder of former times has
[829] disappeared. But they complain that they are becoming ever
[162] fewer, not, say, because of especially devastating sicknesses, but because only daughters are preponderantly born to them. I do not know whether this phenomenon also occurs among other ichthyophagists. But that is what they are in the truest sense of the word.

226 During the greater part of the year they feed themselves and
262 their dogs almost exclusively on fish. Mukssún and o'mul of
231 considerable size are the principal fish, also taiméne /taimen/ and néljma, for which, however, this was not the proper season, and therefore, instead of the anticipated delicacy, we had
226 to be content with the former, less prized fish. Otherwise only a few smaller kinds of fish are found here, but no sturgeon or sterlet, although these, as we /183/ learned on the journey, are caught, even though rarely, much farther upstream in the region of the Ssiligír. Fishing is also productive in the tundra lakes; in particular two kinds present there were brought to us, the ihúkí and the mungnúr, the latter a very tasty fish that is also quite common in the Olenék itself, where from the Ssiligír

/184 cont./

224 caught in traps, but is also dug out of its den, as we ourselves had
[435] an opportunity to observe on our return journey. The price of a good skin here yields on the average about a ruble, but many different kinds are distinguished according to quality, and the poorer ones are valued at only half a ruble; the winter pelts are, of course, the best. The highly prized blue variety of the arctic fox seems
[651] to be practically unknown here. The crown tax as well as the goods purchased from the merchants are paid for with the skins of the arctic fox.

[543] Around Easter a kind of annual fair is held here, at which appear both the inhabitants of the islands lying in front of the mouth of the Olenék and those from the nearest settlements of the forest region, in order /185/ to trade skins for the necessary commodities
[511] from the traders -- tobacco, tea, cloth, ironware, etc. Despite the inhospitable climate the people here seem to be well off and
[512] very content. Even during the dark months they go about their
[132] activities out in the open, especially fishing, and only about the time of the reappearance of the sun, around the Day of the Holy Three Kings (sixth of January, old style), when the most frightful snowstorms set in, do they shut themselves up completely -- often
342 for a couple of weeks -- in their dwellings. The latter are much
362 more solidly built than in the forest region, in order to offer suf-
313 ficient resistance against the force of the storms. The material for building as well as for heating consists of driftwood which is supplied by the river and even more by the ocean. Besides the
797 merchants, Boljkalák is also visited almost annually by a missionary, who holds services in the chapel here. Chitrow praises the devoutness of the people -- the outward signs of this did not remain unnoticed by us either.

554 On the day after our arrival the elder (stárosta) of the
292 Kangaláss Jakuten /Yakut/ appeared with fresh reindeer for the
123 return journey. He ranked higher than both the local elder and the one accompanying us and wore, as a mark of distinction, a sort of uniform, a yellowish gray cloth coat with red trimming
233 and a gold-embroidered belt with a short sword. The new reindeer, which had to be given a day of rest, and the previous ones

53:Tokarev and Gurvich E-4 (no date) 1964
RV2 Yakut RV2

most of the vocabulary and the grammatical structure are undoubtedly Turkic in origin. At the same time, the language contains a considerable number of loan words from the Mongol and Tungus languages. Academician V. V. Radlov (1908) put forward the hypothesis that the vocabulary, phonetic structure, and even the grammatical structure of the Yakut language has a pre-Turkic, more ancient stratum of partly Mongol and partly indeterminate origin.

The latest research, admittedly, has not confirmed this hypothesis; hence the problem of non-Turkic elements in the Yakut language requires further study. Analysis of the names of the Yakut tribal-clan groups (known from 17th-century documents and also from later data) confirms that the Yakut population is further made up of immigrant groups from the south. To judge by the names, these include the present-day Batulins, Khorins, Tumats, Ergits, and some other clans and nasleg[1]. It may be considered that pastoral groups, taking their nomadic culture with them, gradually infiltrated the Middle Lena Basin from the south, from the Baykal regions. One of the principal groups of these migrants from the south was evidently the Kurykans—a Turkic people inhabiting the western Baykal region in the 9th and 10th centuries. Since some of the Kurykans clearly contributed to the composition of the western Buryats later on, this explains many features of similarity in the culture of the western Buryats and Yakuts and the wide distribution of the same anthropological type among both of them.

The trek northwards was gradual and took a long time. In the Amga-Lena watershed, under conditions favorable for pastoralism, these newly arrived groups settled down, establishing contact with the local hunting-fishing population. In the process of economic and cultural contact, there was gradual absorption of the local population by the newcomers. A higher, pastoral type of economy and southern elements of culture, as well as the Turkic language, became predominant.

Such is the ethnogenesis of the Yakuts in the light of present-day knowledge.

Precise historical accounts of the Yakuts only date from the time of their first contact with the Russians, that is to say, 1620, and annexation to the Russian State. At that time the Yakuts were not a single political unit, but were divided into a number of independent tribes. Tribal relations were already decomposing, however, and there was a fairly clearly marked class stratification. The tsarist voyevods and soldiery took advantage of the intertribal strife to break the resistance of some of the Yakut population; they also took advantage of the class differences within it by pursuing a policy of systematic support of the ruling aristocratic clique, the princelings (toyons), whom they turned into their own agents for purposes of governing the Yakut district. From that moment on, the class differences among the Yakuts began to become more clearly marked.

The Yakut masses led a hard life. They paid tribute in sable and fox furs, had to perform a number of other compulsory services and were exploited by the tsarist soldiery, Russian merchants and their own toyons. After several unsuccesful uprisings (1634, 1636–1637, 1639–1640, and 1642), and after the toyons had gone over to the side of the voyevods, the Yakut masses could only retaliate against the oppression by sporadic attempts at resistance and flight from their native ulusy to outlying

[1] A territorial and population unit; originally, the members of a single camp, now equivalent to the rayon.—Ed.

53:Tokarev and Gurvich E-4 (no date) 1964
RV2 Yakut RV2

parts. By the end of the 18th century, the fur resources of the Yakut district were running out and the district itself had been partially devastated through the piratical rule of the tsarist authorities. At the same time, the Yakut population, which had migrated from the Lena-Vilyuy district for various reasons, appeared on the borderland of Yakutiya, where they had not been seen before—on the Kolyma, Indigirka, Olenek and Anabar right up to the Lower Tunguska Basin.

But even during those first few decades contact with the Russian people favorably influenced the economics and culture of the Yakuts. The Russians brought a higher culture with them; agriculture was already in evidence on the Lena by the middle of the 17th century; the Russian type of dwelling, Russian fabric clothes, new trades, new furnishings and domestic objects slowly began to find their way among the Yakut population.

It is an extremely important fact that the establishment of Russian authority in Yakutiya put a stop to the intertribal warring and looting by the toyons, which up to that time had been a great hardship for the Yakut population.

An end was also put to the arbitrary behavior of the Russian soldiers, who often fell out among themselves and tried to draw the Yakuts into their quarrels. The order established in 1640 in the Yakut country was better than the previous state of chronic anarchy and constant internecine strife.

In the 18th century, by dint of the further penetration by the Russians to the east (the annexation of Kamchatka, the Chukchi peninsula, the Aleutian Islands and Alaska), Yakutiya played the part of a transit camp for new campaigns and the acquisition of more distant lands.

Between 1720 and 1740, the expeditions of Bering increased the importance of the Yakutsk-Okhotsk highway, which was used to transport a great deal of freight (this highway retained its importance up to the middle of the 19th century). All this drew Yakutiya into Russia's system of economic ties and thereby raised the general level of the productive forces of that territory.

The influx of Russian peasants (particularly along the Lena Valley on account of the construction of the mail route in 1773) created the right conditions for mutual influence between Russian and Yakut cultural elements. By the end of the 17th and 18th centuries, agriculture began to be practiced by the Yakuts, though at first it was a very slow business and Russian-type houses began to appear. Nevertheless, even in the 19th century the number of Russian settlers was comparatively small.

In addition to peasant colonization, of great importance in the 19th century was the system of convict settlements in Yakutiya. Together with the criminal convicts, whose effect on the Yakuts was negative, political exiles began to appear in Yakutiya in the second half of the 19th century; these were first the Narodniks[2], and later, in the 1890's, the Marxists, and they played a large part in the cultural and political development of the Yakut masses.

By the beginning of the 20th century, great strides had been made in the economic development of Yakutiya, at least in the central regions

---

[2] Literally, "Populists;" adherents of a political movement directed toward a radical reconstruction of the social order through the peasantry.—Ed.